

In the Claims

Claims 1 to 20 are pending in the application.

Claims 11-20 are withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 1 to 10 are rejected.

Explanation of Amendments in the Claims:

1. (amended) A container ~~for use~~ in combination with a shovel having an elongate handle and a scoop supported at one end of the handle, the container comprising:
walls a base portion having an open top end;
a lid portion securable to the base portion such that the lid portion encloses the open top end of the base portion at a seam formed between the base portion and the lid portion to surrounding a hollow interior of the container; ~~and~~
a scoop opening formed in one of the ~~walls~~ portions which is suitably sized to receive the scoop of the shovel therethrough; ~~and~~
a flexible gate extending across the scoop opening to engage the scoop as the scoop is pulled through the scoop opening.
2. (original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein there is provided an access opening in communication with the scoop opening which is arranged to permit the scoop to be located within the hollow interior of the container with the handle extending through the scoop opening without disturbing contents of the scoop.
3. (cancelled)
4. (amended) The container according to Claim 3 ~~1~~ wherein there is provided an access slot extending between the seam and the scoop opening for receiving the handle of the shovel therethrough.
5. (amended) The container according to Claim 3 ~~1~~ wherein the scoop opening is provided in the base portion.
6. (amended) The container according to Claim 1 wherein ~~there is provided a~~ the flexible gate member comprises bristles which spans span at least part way across the scoop opening to engage the scoop as the scoop is pulled through the scoop opening.
7. (original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein there is provided a

shelf projecting outwardly from the container immediately below the scoop opening.

8. (original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein there is provide a receptacle on an outer side of the walls having an open top end for receiving the scoop of the shovel therein in storage.

9. (original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein there is provided a liner hanger supported on the walls on the hollow interior of the container suitable for suspending a liner therefrom below the scoop opening.

10. (original) The container according to Claim 1 wherein there is provided a bottom wall formed of an insulated fireproof material.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21.(new) A container in combination with a shovel having an elongate handle and a scoop supported at one end of the handle, the container comprising:

a base portion having an open top end;

a lid portion securable to the base portion such that the lid portion encloses the open top end of the base portion at a seam formed between the base portion and the lid portion to surround a hollow interior of the container;

a scoop opening formed in one of the portions which is suitably sized to

receive the scoop of the shovel therethrough, the scoop opening having dimensions near cross sectional dimensions of the scoop of the shovel; and

an access opening in communication between the scoop opening and the seam between the lid portion and the base portion.

22. (new) The container according to Claim 21 wherein the access opening comprises a slot having a suitable width to only allow passage of the handle of the shovel therethrough.

23. (new) The container according to Claim 21 wherein there is provided a flexible gate formed of bristles extending across the scoop opening.

24. (new) The container according to Claim 23 wherein the bristles fully span the scoop opening.

25. (new) The container according to Claim 23 wherein the bristles project inwardly across the scoop opening about a periphery of the scoop opening.

26. (new) The container according to Claim 21 wherein there is provided a plurality of bristles spanning across the access opening.

27. (new) The container according to Claim 21 wherein there is provided a plurality of flexible bristles spanning across both the scoop opening and the access opening.

28. (new) The container according to Claim 21 wherein the base portion includes a floor comprising substantially fireproof material which is insulated.

29. (new) The container according to Claim 21 wherein the scoop opening is spaced from the open top end of the base portion at the seam between the base portion and the lid portion.

30. (new) A container in combination with a shovel having an elongate handle and a scoop supported at one end of the handle, the container comprising:

a base portion having an open top end and a floor comprising substantially fireproof material which is insulated;

a lid portion securable to the base portion such that the lid portion encloses the open top end of the base portion at a seam formed between the base portion and the lid portion to surround a hollow interior of the container;

a scoop opening formed in one of the portions which is suitably sized to receive the scoop of the shovel therethrough, the scoop opening having dimensions near cross sectional dimensions of the scoop of the shovel;

an access opening in communication between the scoop opening and the seam between the lid portion and the base portion; and

a flexible gate formed of bristles extending across the scoop opening.